



Memorial Day Start of Free Admission for Active Military to For Whom It Stands

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A Top 10 "Must-See" Exhibit - *USA Today*
Bright's work is "a showstopper" - *Baltimore Sun*



TeKeyia and David by Sheila Pree Bright

May 22, 2014, BALTIMORE - This Memorial Day, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum honors active military by offering free admission through the Blue Star Museums program. Active military can enjoy

the newest exhibition, *For Whom It Stands: The Flag and the American People*, and general admission to the museum, at no charge from May 21 - September 1, 2014.

[USA Today recently named *For Whom It Stands: The Flag and the American People* in its 'Top 10 Must-See Exhibits this Summer'](http://www.usatoday.com/story/experience/america/best-of-lists/2014/05/07/10-must-see-museum-exhibits-this-summer/8811633/) (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/experience/america/best-of-lists/2014/05/07/10-must-see-museum-exhibits-this-summer/8811633/>) in the nation. *For Whom It Stands* explores the U.S. flag and the diversity of Americans for whom the flag stands, as represented through artwork and artifacts.

Inspired by Grace Wisher, the 13-year old African American girl who contributed to the creation of the Star-Spangled Banner as an indentured servant in Mary Pickersgill's household, the exhibition is on view May 17, 2014 - February 28, 2015, in conjunction with the 200th anniversary of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across America that offers free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2014. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. More information about the program is available at www.arts.gov/national/blue-star-museums. (<http://arts.gov/national/blue-star-museums>)

The African American contributor to the Star-Spangled Banner

During the War of 1812, flag maker Mary Pickersgill sewed the original Star-Spangled Banner in a house on the same city block as the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. While Pickersgill's story is well-known, less mentioned is the story of Grace Wisher. Wisher's personal effects are not displayed here and may have been lost to history. Her untold story urged us to share other stories about the flag, so that they are not lost.

Stories span pride to protest

For Whom It Stands features more than 100 works of art, artifacts, documents, and photographs that reflect the breadth of American experiences. *The Veteran* is a mixed media work on skateboard by Rafael Colón, a self-taught Puerto Rican artist. *A Tribute to New York City* sculpted by Israeli-American Dalya Luttwak sits in the same show as *Prayer Rug for America*, by the Arab American, Helen Zughaib. Other pieces include a photograph of the Navajo code talkers who communicated the message to soldiers to raise the U.S. flag at the Battle of Iwo Jima, and a mixed media work by Chinese-American Flo Oy Wong about the detention of Chinese immigrants at Angel Island. **Gordon Parks' *American Gothic***, a sobering portrait of a woman in front of the flag, with a broom in one hand, and mop in the other, is a biting riff on Grant Wood's famous work of the same name. [View and download hi-res images of the show](https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bw-0XL4X9mmgLU1KUXJmU0E4eW8&usp=sharing) (<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0Bw-0XL4X9mmgLU1KUXJmU0E4eW8&usp=sharing>).

A fragment of the original Star-Spangled Banner serves as a starting point to investigate the broad history and representation of the United States flag as an icon of our nation and its people. A sound installation curated by beat box artist Shodekeh features pivotal interpretations of the national anthem.

A section dedicated to **controversial interpretations of the flag** includes *The People's Flag Show* by Faith Ringgold, a seminal artist in the canon of flag art. The work was created to advertise an exhibition for which she and two other artists were arrested shortly after the show opening.

Military history is included here. For the first time, items from the museum's **L. Albert Scipio Collection** of minority military artifacts will be on display.

"*For Whom It Stands* seeks to tell the stories of the flag with a wide-angled perspective in which we all can see ourselves reflected in the national fabric," says the exhibition's curator, Dr. Michelle Joan Wilkinson.

Key Programs

Caribbean Heritage and Wave Your Flag Celebration **June 14, 2014. 12-4pm**

During Caribbean American Heritage Month, we screen *The Merikens*, a documentary about a community in Trinidad descended from enslaved people of the Chesapeake. The ancestors of Merikens were runaway slaves who joined the British forces during the War of 1812. In exchange for their service, they were resettled in a British colony after the war. St. Veronica's Youth Steel Orchestra closes out the afternoon with a Caribbean-style rendition of our National Anthem. The event is a part of the Smithsonian's national Raise It Up celebration.

Companion Exhibit *For Whom It Stands, TOO* Opens **July 1, 2014-September 14, 2014**

The museum held an open call for flag-related artwork. Selected works are included in *For Whom It Stands*, and in this companion exhibition. *For Whom It Stands, TOO* will be on view at the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House & Museum, 844 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

The National Anthem, Remixed **September 14, 2014. 5pm**

Renowned beat box artist Shodekeh leads a new interpretation of the national anthem using virtuoso vocal percussion. Performers include the Baltimore Boom Bap Society, a group that performs improvised hip hop, and Classical Revolution, a collection of classically-trained musicians who perform classical music in unexpected places.

The exhibition and programs have been financed in part with State Funds from the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission, an instrumentality of the State of Maryland. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

About the Reginald F. Lewis Museum

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture is Baltimore's premier facility highlighting the history and accomplishments of African Americans with a special focus on Maryland's African American community. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum is the East Coast's largest African American

museum, occupying an 82,000 square-foot facility with ample permanent and special exhibition space, interactive learning environments, auditorium, resource center, oral history recording studio, museum shop, café, classrooms, meeting rooms, outside terrace and reception areas. The museum is located near Baltimore's Inner Harbor at the corner of Pratt and President Streets. The museum is also accessible on Baltimore's Charm City Circulator Orange and Green Routes. For more information, please call 443-263-1800 or visit www.RFLewisMuseum.org (<http://rflewismuseum.org/>)



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